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SONGS OF A LIFETIME

SEAL



SONGS OF A LIFETIME

(PARTIAL COLLECTION)

BY

LYNAS C. SEAL



Rhymed Rest Between the Hours of Toil



*In the twilight, look and listen:
There are sounds and weaves that glisten,
Dreams and old familiar faces;
Lights, and love in lowly places.*



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*Not how faultless and exalted
But how truthful and sincere.*

—L. C. S.

SING LOW, MY MUSE.

Sing low, my Muse, oh, let thy song
Flow liquid, rich and clear,
Nor let its strains be very long
But to the heart most dear;
And, oh, let every note be sweet
To its true measure set complete.

Release the thrills of winding streams
And hills that from them rise;
Melt into them the star-lit dreams
Of bright and mellow skies;
Within my heart I charge thee, though
My faithful Muse, thou sing them low.

By chance we might be overheard—
Sing true thine every air;
The sweetest singing woodland bird
Is not heard everywhere,
But, like his song, let thine be dear,
Serenely pure and heart-sincere.

July 2, 1907.

SONG PERFECT.

I sang a song in woodland dell
When earth was all a-bloom;
Through artless art within it fell
One minor chord of gloom;
O'er head in answer robin sang
And true and far his music rang
Immaculate, Immaculate.

Beside an ever faithful stream,
Mid by-paths ever dear,
I sang again, but in my dream.
Let fall a note of fear;
Without a note foreboding ill,
Brave robin echoed with a will,
"Immaculate, Immaculate."

Shall I not sing this perfect day,
Imperfect though my strain,
Loose every note that haunts my lay,
In human heart refrain?
Shall I know where the strain be rent
So long as robin sings content,
"Immaculate, Immaculate."

Nov. 28, 1909.

COLUMBUS.

Down along the Driftwood valley
On an east bank high and dry,
Lies a sparkling little city
'Neath a patch of Hoosier sky.

She's the home of thrift and spirit—
Aye for better, ne'er for worse—
Rightly credited the center
Of the western universe.

Fed and happy, souls ten thousand
Glide serenely through her streets;
Meeting, passing, each civilian
Warm the worthy stranger greets.

She's the namesake of "Columbus"—
There is something in the name
For Columbus like the sailor,
Has a world-enduring fame.

Down along the Driftwood valley
With Jehovah's banner high
Lies the city of Columbus
'Neath a patch of Hoosier sky.

June, 1906.

INTERMISSION.

Now that methinks I read the tracings
Of Time's router on your brow,
And know what mean these silver lacings
In your hair, whereof and how,
I'm sure life's thread is waxing brittle
While your heart burns with desire—
You're weary, let us rest a little
That we may less quickly tire.

Would we elect the consummation
Of the journey past Death Inn,
We must not hurry t'ward the station,
Heart of hearts, if we would win.
What work we do is scarce a tittle
When we urge our feet in vain—
We're tiring, let us rest a little,
'Morrow's night will net us gain.

January 19, 1914.

HOOSIER BANANAS.

October! Month of dear delights!
Full-handed, laughing back at June
Across the empty days and nights,
She chants the praise of Harvest Moon.
I sing of vales and quiet dales,
Of pawpaw thickets by the brook
Where, in the night, unscared regales
A 'possum in some crannied nook
Eating a pawpaw
Plain, homely pawpaw,
Ripe, mellow pawpaw,
Down by the brook.

Indulgent memory and fond
Prompts feelings I would fain express,
So dear, so gracious is the bond
Of youth and age; in thankfulness
To you I bring with carolling
The vision back to which I look—
A lad in jeans hard by the spring
A-robbing 'possum of his nook,
Eating a pawpaw,
Large-seeded pawpaw,
Gold-meated pawpaw,
Down by the brook.

Denude the hills, lay bare the dells
Till not a ripened falling nut
Is heard; nor thickets cast their spells
Of warbled song or solace, but
My fancy's pale surrounds the vale
Of pawpaw thickets by the brook
Where, in the night, unscared regale
Opossums in some crannied nook,
Eating big pawpaws,
Russet-rind pawpaws,
Sweet, molten pawpaws,
Down by the brook.

October 16, 1910.

THE LITTLE POET.

Who doth make the child a song—
 The little poet—
One to cherish long and long
Though the wind blow right or wrong?
 The little poet.
Child life in its rapture brings
Stories of enraptured things
And doth mount when given wings
 By the little poet.

Who doth aid youth's struggling flight—
 The little poet—
Sends it searching through the night
Winging upward to the light?
 The little poet.
Questing low it sees defined
God's true purposes divined
By the wayside through mind
 Of the little poet.

Who doth entertain the man—
 The little poet—
Rooted, grounded in his plan,
Delving as none other can?
 The little poet.
Songs that breathe the happy part
Drown the frenzy of the mart
In recesses of the heart—
 Blessings, little poet.

—January 28, 1915.

"RAUS MIT 'IM."

(Reflections for the Kaiser.)

I wouldn't be a kaiser if
The job were offered me
With guards galore of all the riff-
Raff of foul Germany;
I have a conscience that is worth
More than the land and sea
And kaisership of all the earth
Up till Eternity.

I wouldn't be a kaiser for
I couldn't make a slave
Of any mortal born of Thor
And "strafe" him to the grave;
My conscience loves equality,
Would lift up, not deprave;
It loves a saner polity—
My subjects I would save.

I wouldn't be a kaiser and
Indulge in beastly revel
And other stunts of brutal brand,
That pale and cringe the devil;
I'd rather be a Cherokee
And roam the barren plains,
A horned toad or stingaree
Without a bit of brains.

I wouldn't be a kaiser—Why?
I've said so "why" enough
Although I have a hot supply
Of this same kind of stuff;
I love my freedom of the West
Where men make friends of man;
Love all that God has made and blest
And called American.

December 20, 1917.

MY SWEETHEART.

My sweetheart's eyes are rarest blue,
Her lips are red, her heart is true;
Her hair is silk made golden brown,
Her neck is snow of eiderdown,
Her teeth are pearls of India town.

She tells me all her dear heart knows
In proof of all the love she shows;
Each day—it does not matter whether
It be of sun or stormy weather—
Somehow, somewhere we get together.

Her voice is low, her touch is light—
True lovers loving keep from sight—
My face rests in her gold-brown hair
While we embrace, a happy pair,
Exchanging love with share on shore.

I pray this love I claim as mine
May ne'er be less nor less divine,
But hark! A voice calls earnestly—
She's coming now in baby glee—
“Oh, pap-paw, pap-paw, tak-ee me.”

January 4, 1918.

ORINOCO

From a few simple cottages, rapidly grown
To a nice little town through a zeal of her own,
She stretches away to the brink of the stream
And gleams like a star in a mid-summer dream.

With thoroughfares running 'neath low, shady trees
That filter the sunlight and fondle the breeze,
And velvety lawns beaming up to the street,
She offers the weary a peaceful retreat.

She holds all the charms of the pastoral lanes
Where Nature is full and where quietude reigns
Save the hum of the shaft and the murmur of steam
So mighty—yet mild as the sigh of a dream.

The lark tunes his lyre on the housetop at morn
As free as he did when he dwelt in the corn;
He vies in ascent with the factory smoke
And leads the race heavenward many a stroke.

Oh! ye who would dwell in Utopian vale,
Or covet a draught from the long-hidden grail,
Your hopes of desire all abide by the stream
Reflecting the skies of her radiant dream.

May 19, 1907.

ORIENT DELIGHT.

The solstice spreads within my far-flung walls
Of space June's mantle, and the sun's gold wedge
Of light cleaves off the dark horizon's edge
The day; in hallowed benediction falls
Each bent ray of the east—the day entralls
Not more. My sheer hope-nestlings quickly fledge,
Pursue my orient delight and pledge
Me dreams that habitate Elysian halls.

Upon my low, east step I sit and read
My poet; in the soft, refracted light
Comes clear his subtle meanings. Now I know
The sun has slipped below night's rim and freed
The day and me—my book-page grows less bright—
Within me burns the ceaseless afterglow.

—Feb. 5, 1914.

THE RILEY TOUCH.

The Riley touch! If you but draw a-near
 You feel it clasp you, hold you fondly thrall;
 You say: "Thus bind me ever; over all
My destinies preside." It renders clear
Your view like that of mountain atmosphere;
 The Pixies frolic in your path and crawl
Up dizzy hights at merest beck or call—
You hear rare sounds that moved our poet's ear.

A keener retrospect invests your youth;
 The hard past mellows in the bloom of June:
 The veil of Heaven lifts; the boundless peace
And joy of two worlds blend in common truth—
 The Riley touch! It wakes your heart a-tune;
 You see your own life wrought in golden fleece.

Dec. 21, 1912.

TO AN OLD COAT.

In glad surprise
Before my eyes
Float memories of brighter skies
When I, with you
Of spotless hue,
Disported with old friends and new.

The rummage sought
And often caught
Full many a weave more deftly wrought;
Yet, mark the day
I stowed away
Your fraying form for new array.

Fleet time and change
Oft rearrange
Old loves that they do not estrange;
On years remote
And you I dote,
My obsolete and faded coat.

December 31, 1910.

“WITH ALL THY FAULTS.”

Through thorn-set stem the sap creeps up
And steeps the folds of a flower-cup
Till summer's sunlight doth disclose
The charm and fragrance of the rose;
I pluck her with a prickly thrill
But, with her fault, I love her still.

The bee goes forth among the flowers
Improving all the daylight hours
And brings his treasures home a-wing
Though warns me back with deadly sting;
He serves me well with constant will
And, with his fault, I love him still.

But thou are human, friend, I know,
And life is more than outward show;
Thou hast all passions of the heart
To pierce my soul like a deadly dart
But greater is thy constant will—
“With all thy faults I love thee still.”

—Feb. 28, 1908

WILLIE BROWN'S SWEETHEART.

Oh, a dear little thing she is spoiling with praise,
An astute, tiny creature with city-bred ways,
So much like a big dolly just bought off the shelf
One would think she were almost a dolly herself—
Just a bundle of fluffery, feathers and down
And the city-bred sweetheart of dear Willie Brown.

She goes out to the country to see Willie's folks
And engage herself with them at cracking their jokes;
Here and there a near neighbor awaits her to pass
To obtain a fair view of the dear little lass—
Just a bundle of fluffery, feathers and down
And the city-bred sweetheart of dear Willie Brown.

Oh, the dear little strolls through the bowers for hours
While she makes her debut with the cattle and flowers!
When she pets and she fondles the dear little calf
Do the pigs and the chickens and turkeys all laugh?
Such a bundle of fluffery, feathers and down
And the city-bred sweetheart of dear Willie Brown!

Such a dear little country with dear little hills
And the dear little birds with their dear little trills!
Such dear little rambles to pass with a whirl
In the company of such a dear little girl—
Just a bundle of fluffery, feathers and down
And the city-bred sweetheart of dear Willie Brown!

December, 1906.

LITTLE WILD HEART.

Merry, merry Little Wild Heart,
Wilt thou hasten unto me?
When I seek thee mid the blossoms
Thou art sporting 'neath the tree;
When I seek thee in the woodland
Thou art strolling on the lea—
Idle, merry, roving Wild Heart,
Well you know I'm seeking thee!

Coy, provoking Little Wild Heart,
Fairy, airy are thy feet;
When I think them treading to me
That I may thee kindly greet,
Surely, surely, somewhere distant
Thou art plucking blossoms sweet;
Thou art always from me fleeing,
Flying with thy fairy feet.

Laughing, independent Wild Heart,
Now so lightly, spritely free,
Not until thy heart be broken
Shalt thou surely come to me;
Little Wild Heart, my own Mild Heart
I shall gladly welcome thee,
But before thy heart be breaking
Come, oh, quickly come to me!

February 20, 1908.

A MAN NOW.

Oh, Tim has got a sweetheart—

How do you think I know?

A charming daily greet-heart—

There's something tells me so!

He is so very different,

So changed; 'tis very, very plain

His mind is of a newer bent;

He is both chivalrous and vain.

He treats his mother with regard;

His air, his very thoughts are kind;

He's wide awake, his vision marred

By no past negligence of mind.

He's manly, his whole carriage straight;

Upon his forehead sports a curl—

Oh, all his actions here of late

Speak plainly of some pretty girl!

He wears a locket and a chain

Enchanted with a dreaming dove,

I'm sure. 'Tis very, very plain

That Timothy is deep in love.

Yes, Tim has got a sweetheart—

Now, don't you think I know?

A charming, daily greet-heart—

There's something tells me so.

January 15, 1911.

GOURDS.

For ages have the poets laved
In perfumes that the fields afford,
Nor ever sang of the depraved,
Unorthodox but useful gourd.

Aggressive, pushing this way, that,
Revolting to the finer sense,
Insatiate—its habitat
The pickets of the backyard fence.

Imbued with meager traits of pride—
But strong in duty's enterprise—
It swings three dippers side by side,
Three flagons fine as gods devise.

Yon specie bears a large spheroid—
Slice off the top, you have a bowl,
A sugar trough, a spacious void,
Or, if you will, a casserole.

Beside it hangs a smaller mate;
Just chip its side and hang it low—
Watch Tommy Wren come dedicate
In ecstacies that come and go.

Here hangs a brace of clubs—a stroke
From one of which, well aimed would smash
A wolf stone cold. Want a cool smoke?
Then draw it through this Calabash.

This nook is Novelty Display—
Select yourself a souvenir;
A Luffa dish cloth packed away,
A baby's rattle, pseudo pear.

A nest egg that will suit as well
As one that biddy laid herself;
A darning ball, a kewpie bell,
A Turkish turban for your shelf.

Now, when we've sung the songs we've known,
Played all that memory affords,
Are we so vain we would not prone
Attend an orchestra of gourds?

January 13, 1920.

“EVERYBODY LOVES A LOVER.”

“Everybody loves a lover”
Has been said, and wisely well;
Cynics pause, salute, uncover
To the magic of his spell.

Everybody loves a lover!
Near his warm heart brimming over
All would closely nestle, hover
In the spray as bees the clover—
Everybody loves a lover.

Everybody loves a lover—
Armorless and unafraid
Walks he, never seeking cover,
Faithful, gentle, fearless, staid.

Everybody loves a lover—
Love turns back the vagrant, rover,
Long-lost heart-keys doth recover—
He is like the wide world over!
Everybody loves a lover.

March 8, 1916

EARTH'S HEAVENLY TIES.

Earth's heavenly ties—my spirit-boon,
My covenant my heart's elite,
Life-beacons for me fitly strewn
On pathways safest for my feet;

My monitor of love and truth,
My mentor of true beauty's worth,
God's moulder of my plastic youth—
Synthetic bond of heaven and earth.

So much of heaven binds me here,
So much I love escapes beyond—
I may go thither without fear
Of danger to their sacred bond.

Each day grows earth more sweetly young,
Old friendships deal me new surprise;
Beyond the tomb today is sung
God's praises to earth's heavenly ties.

Jan. 15, 1914.

TO THE BRIDEGROOM.

Oh, take her, though always remembering this,
That beautiful, pure and unsullied she is.
She weds you because you are stalwart and strong
And willing to guard her whole life against wrong.

You love her for whatever else you are not;
She loves you—about you revolves all her thought;
By nature and love you not longer are twain
And, bound by these ties, may you ever remain.

Now, be this your innermost pleasure of mind,
Though spanning the earth, that you ever shall find,
That for you, through girlhood to womanhood grown,
A mother has taught her—still calls her her own.

And whatever hence for you both be in store—
Of good or of ill—she is yours for e'ermore
To guard and to keep though remembering this,
That beautiful, pure and unsullied she is.

March, 1907.

INSEPARABLE.

Is there a pathway each wherein walk Joy and Sorrow?
Where are their goals? Where do their pilgrimages end?
May they move side by side today though not tomorrow,
Or do they always hand in hand together wend?

The youthful yearn and strive for pleasure unrelenting,
Dire Poverty would Sorrow's stinging pangs destroy;
Sin, bowing down beside his ashes and repenting,
Doth seek communion with the peace of pious Joy.

Within the changeful world there is so much to suffer,
Of life to live, of care, of death, of grief, to bear,
And Joy estranged doth only make the pathway rougher
Where Fate deals out unduly tearful Sorrow's share.

Where there is comfort there is always burden-bearing
Fair Youth has never been without untimely loss;
Beneath her mantle Gladness aptly may be wearing
The tear-stained symbol of a heart-imbedded cross.

November 14, 1907.

THE GIFT OF GIFTS.

O, love of Loves, O, Gift supreme!
So free, so fair—of priceless worth;
A jewel plucked from heaven's gleam
To light the multitudes of earth!
O, Gift of gifts—O, praise the Giver
For His deep, undying love;
O, parent true, to give, deliver
Heaven's heart down from above!

To be remembered! O, the joy
Of this to all who kiss the rod!
And to remember! Blest employ
In this dear sentiment of God!
Whatever gift, or small however,
Given in the Savior's name,
Bespeaks a joy to last forever,
Down eternity the same.

December 22, 1920.

GRIEF.

See the patient, strong man weeping
With a flow of galling tears;
One great torrent is now sweeping
Down his battlement of years.

Kissing each, he, warm enfolding
All with two-fold tenderness,
Weeping, prays, the whole beholding
All his children motherless.

A MOTHER'S A MOTHER.

A mother's a mother this mighty world over
Whatever of hope or dismay;
Though her child be a model, delinquent or rover,
A mother's a mother for aye.
Though fortune wait kindly or pass to another,
Omitting her own by the way,
She's ever, oh, ever the same loving mother—
A mother's a mother for aye.

January 25, 1907.

AN AUTUMN TWILIGHT.

The great-mouthing chimney, tow'ring 'mid the trees
Has swallowed up the last day-farer of the sky;
In zig-zag, mystic course the dragon fly
Pursues its prey; with noiseless bounds and ease
Toad-sentries move adown the walk and seize,
Now left, now right, poor beetles blund'ring by;
Small strident voices fill the hush; the cry
Of one lone night-bird stabs the stilly breeze.

From some neglected field drifts o'er a whisk
Of thistle-down; one bold star peeps; the moon,
Long pallid, blushes at her anxious nasté
To woo departing light; a lively frisk
Of melody akin to ancient rune,
Floats by the day into the dark'ning waste.

Dec. 18, 1910.

LOVE IN A BUNGALOW.

Princes and palaces, peoples and powers—
Where might I find us a shelter like ours!
Happily, happily, days come and go—
Life and true love in a dear bungalow.

Hard drive the lances of cold winter-rain
Shattering low on the front window-pane;
Heartlessly restless and tireless winds blow
High o'er the roof of our warm bungalow.

Fretting eaves fondly persuade me to rest,
Love lulls a babe on her innocent breast—
Not in the world do more cherished hopes glow,
Love and a life in a dear bungalow.

Soon shall the casements stand open for hours
Drenched with the perfumes of many May flowers;
Up in the sugar-tree soon shall o'erflow
Oriole's heart to our low bungalow.

Princes and palaces, peoples and powers—
Where might I find us a shelter like ours!
Happily, happily, years come and go—
Life and true love in a dear bungalow.

—Nov. 21, 1910.

A POET'S FAITH.

When the beacons of twilight through infinite shine
 Have, at last, won the heart of the wanderer home—
When the quest of far reaches and terraced incline,
 The tide-ripen reefs mid the coral sea foam;
When the lure of the limelight of station and name,
 Have worn the blood tired, all its vagrancy wrung,
The low, glowing vigils of home shall upflame,
 In the calm of whose glory my songs shall be sung.

When the heart beats with gladness at lisping of trees,
 The plaint of a songster, a rivulet's trill;
When the ear learns to listen to numberless glees
 Of muffled, low voices that constantly fill
The great dome of sunshine, the temples of night;
 When the soul accepts grief when dread sorrow be flung
Adrift in life's sea, never out of sight quite,
 The health of God's wealth to my songs shall be sung.

Dec. 3, 1913.

THE DARKEST HOUR IS JUST BEFORE DAWN.

The night is young, the firmament is bright
With vieing stars, low moon—yet it is night—
And, ceaseless, down the vistas of the deep
 The jetsam sinks to beds of weed and spawn;
The stars go out, the flotsam wildly leaps—
 “The darkest hour is just before the dawn.”

Far out, far out, the sea is darkly dim
Where great hulks hide on the horizon's rim;
Nor yet doth morn in robe of silver plaque
 Lift at night's curtain all too tightly drawn;
Before me drift the flotsam and the wrack—
 “The darkest hour is just before the dawn.”

I watch here on this fragile bit of shore
For ligan that may pass once but no more;
No friendly mast shall speak me from the sea
 Because the ship is wreck, my cargo pawn
Upon the surf and held in trust for me—
 Though dark the hour, “ 'tis just before the dawn.”

Feb. 6, 1915.

THE BOYS IN KHAKI.

Beloved! Boys of the Khaki Line!
Oh, sons of Freedom, young and fair,
We worship at your sacred shrine,
Erect, attentive—foreheads bare!

To you, through us, our noble sires
Bequeathed the warmest blood that flows—
The blood that toils and never tires
And smites destruction on our foes.

So long as Wrong asserts his might
And Gospel Truth pervades the earth,
Your sons of sons shall groom and fight
And herald on your sterling worth.

Columbia, your mother heart
Has ached and felt the sharpest pain;
Your lids have burned with keenest smart
But never son has died in vain.

Invincible the Khaki Line!
Brave Boys, we fare forth unafraid—
We worship at your sacred shrine—
Lord bless the peace that you have made.

January 1, 1921.

IMPEDIMENTS

A swimmer fears no tragedy
Nor peril haunts his brain—
A basking bit of revelry
Upon the surface lain,
But clutch him foul around his neck
When you are going down,
And do not reck his saving beck,
The two of you will drown.

A lark, retreating from the heat,
Disports in shady pool,
And when bedraggled head to feet,
Sits dripping clean and cool,
He preens his feathers o'er and o'er
Till they are light and dry
That he may soar and bear once more
His message to the sky.

Stripped free of all impediments
Till, lean, I take the tide,
My sustenance the elements,
I would in safety ride.
Soul-washed of this proud universe
Redundant with its wrong,
I'd fling a verse to every curse
But make for Love a song.

June 25, 1921

MARION

If you would see America
By auto or by rail,
Put her on your itinerary
Before you hit the trail.

Majestic and sublime she stands,
All spick and span as law,
Be-ribboned round with silver sands
Of Mississinewa.

Her many structures staunch and tall,
Imposing in design,
Rise up in an unbroken wall
In straight and tacit line.

Tall spires and belfries lifting clear
Fret many miles of sky,
And funnels belching murks that veer
Are everywhere nearby.

On far horizon darkly dim,
Pulsating day and night,
Great engines draw from deep within
The earth the oils of might.

Want eats and other kitchen things,
Or glassware up-to-date—
Or shoes—or stoves—Oh, fiddle strings!
They “make ‘em while you wait.”

Now, when the open roads allure
You on big rounds of travel,
See Marion, Indiana, sure,
Before you quit the gravel.

December 15, 1921

A PIONEER HORSELESS CARRIAGE

A queer, grayish wagon is making the rounds
Without any horses, yet onward it bounds—
A s^range looking aspect to go by itself
And truckle along like a wandering elf.

The witch has climbed off of her smooth running car
And bettered herself, it is certain, by far,
Because she may travel new ways with an ease
That suits her queer fancy, and flirt with the breeze.

An heirloom, her broomstick she willed to the wind,
Took all other chattels and left that behind.
Believer in omens, today, as of yore
The witch may be pranking in front of your door.

The children look eager, are curious, half-wild—
So odd is this wagon and curiously styled
To rant o'er the earth like an unbitted steed
Without ever tiring or slacking its speed!

I've seen this queer wagon go by, now it's twice—
I'd buy one, I'm certain, if I had the price;
My neighbors all worry to feed a matched pair
But witches can live on the thinnest of air.

About 1895.

OUR OCCIDENTAL HABIT.

A tribute to the surgeon's list
Of vitals taken out;
A banquet to the specialist
Who grooms us strong and stout—
We foot the bills of all our ills
And then resume the gait that kills.

A medal for the science lord,
Who lands a deadly germ;
Another to his sovereign ward,
Whose toxin makes it squirm;
The doctor stills us with his pills
Then we resume the gait that kills.

To new restoratives, salute!
We'll pay you for them well;
We'd manacle the smart galoot
Who checks our flying spell—
A mint and mills to all our frills,
A jolly for the gait that kills.

November 25, 1912.

COMPENSATION.

Much work I do doth yield me naught;
Although with righteous, whole intent
Upon the valued thing I wrought
Betide with failure I am fraught,
My labor vainly spent.

I sow but ofttimes lightly reap—
Reap less than all the sowing cost;
Or, reaping heavy, at a sweep
My bounty fails; I little keep
Till that, by chance, be lost.

From shining bits of fancies old
I work a picturesque design
To me a comfort to behold;
Though princely be my Cloth of Gold
It yields no wealth condign.

In labor's sphere lies my domain
That wherefore are my hands;
True motive and right-thinking brain
Work elements of final gain
And hasp life's parted strands.

June 11, 1910.

A QUARTET OF MERCY.

Commemorating the departure of Dr. A. P. Roope, Dr. Thorne,
Miss Elenor Ryan and Mr. Reginald Galligan, for the front in the
great World War.

They heard a voice, 'twas France imploring aid;
Do what she will she can not staunch her flow
Of blood alone; gigantic is her foe.
The leprosy of German lust has made
Its torturous advance; the tainted blade
Of Bismarck reeks with Galic blood although
Poor France has done no wrong; the stifling blow
Of murder failed—the victim's faith is staid.

They went to help poor multi-wounded France,
Help bandage up her gaping shell-torn flesh—
Help nurse her back to health and liberty;
Her God is theirs; they went to help enhance
The day of her deliverance—unleash
Whom Lafayette, alive, would die to free.

February 7, 1918.

TO A SUBTERRANEAN FLOWER

A hyacinth grown in an old, abandoned electric-lighted mine.

Oh, thou fragrant, waxen, snowy-petaled flower,
Hyacinthine queen of thy adored race—
True to all thy excellence this wintry hour
Perfect in all points of thy resplendent grace!

Wert thou weary waiting on slow-footed Time?
Wert thou lonely? Why thus so inopportune?
Hast thou found an everlasting vernal clime
From the bitter changes of this earth immune?

Whither shall I go, or whereat meekly wait,
Biding time as thou hast done through ages past,
To obtain the title of a safe estate
Where there blows no blighting, cutting, wintry blast?

Even so, if I shall serve my fellow men,
Being loved as thou art well beloved of them,
I shall live protected throughout change, and then
Wear, as crystal pure, a worthy diadem.

May 4, 1907.

A WINTER LULLABY

Took-chook! took-chook! the melting snow
Slips off the roof and falls below
And, in the barrel plashing, leaves
A wintry gurgle 'neath the eaves.

Mew! mew! the kitten by the fire
Wakes up and stretches one length nigher
And, purring to the yellow gleams,
He glides away to cat-land dreams.

Chirp! chirp! the cricket 'neath the jar
Calls up his mate in corner far
And, skipping through the mellow light,
They start the drama for the night.

Stitch! stitch! and, soft as melting snow,
Her busy hand moves to and fro;
Her face is brighter than the beam—
My lullaby has brought its dream.

Took-chook! took-chook! the melting snow
Slips off the roof and falls below;
Contented musings through me creep
And, in my chair, I'm—fast asleep.

January, 1906

THE UNFINISHED TIDY.

“A Merry Christmas,” it would read
If it were done. By chance, the need
Of rest caused her to lay it by;
She folded it aside to heed
A neighbor’s want, perhaps—could I
But know the real reason why!

“A Merry Christmas,” bled her heart
Into the blaze of queenly art—
A burning wish surviving time
To all who hold the Christ a part—
Good will to all and as sublime
As any truth wove into rhyme.

Down through the cloth and up and out
Her needle rests secure without
Her hand to ply it with its thread.
Unfinished now, it lies about
Mid flosses yellow, green and red
To voice the love of her now dead.

As deft a hand might weave the floss
To sheen as soft as woodland moss
Till “Merry Christmas” it has said;
But they would be mere words of dross
Of satins yellow, green and red,
That speak no language of the dead.

June 11, 1921

REBA

Oh, beautiful—how beautiful was morn
When spring shook out an early lily-bell
And God set her upon our earth to dwell!
He fashioned her like that fair flower born
Of light. "This sweet child-blossom shall adorn
My treasured garden spot; a lingering spell
Of beauty she shall cast," said He, "and tell
My love to those who pass by her forlorn."

In time full brief He said, "Lest winds blow chill
Too long and blight My bloom, go bring it Me;
'Tis marked 'God's Lily,' full of grace, attired
In spacious splendor; angels, hear My will."
The sister lilies wept of perfume free—
Through tears we sighted heaven and admired.

March 24, 1913.

IMPERIAL NIGHT.

There's no dominion known of light
Surpasses fine Imperial Night;
Her peopled glades, 'mid softest shades,
Awake, when evening's sunlight fades,
On couches, scented, filmy, bright.

A holy peace of love pervades
The fields, the moonlit colonnades
Of sycamore, on either shore
Of Driftwood's water slipping o'er
The rippled sands and rocky grades.

Hers is a many-jeweled crown
Of heavenly light which, streaming down
Her tresses rare—her sovereign hair,
Entrancing features debonair,
Makes halo where the shadows frown.

The callow hills of day are fair
In capes crocheted of dewy air
An astral light—a regal sight,
Gift of the queen, Imperial Night,
From boudoir flush as Ophir glare.

Meandering as the poet strays,
I feel the import of her gaze;
The drowsy spot where sits my cot
Is lost to me, all things forgot
Save lure of Night's Imperial lays.

February 26, 1913.

BABY MAXINE

From the far-away land of Forget-Me-Not,
Of love and of themes of poetry,
With her pet of a mouth like a cherry dot,
My baby came to me.

From the land of the Lilies and Chubby Arms
And the Silken Hair, my baby came
With her blue, true eyes of a thousand charms,
And Maxine is her name.

Oh, bless thee, dear land of Forget-Me-Not,
For the lily wee hands that so harmless be,
And the true, blue eyes that do wonder what
Brings all this joy to me.

Sept. 10, 1916

THE IRWIN GARDEN.

The gate stands open. Here, in tranquil ease,
One breathes a different air. The throbbing mart
Does not disturb. The excellence of art
Is lost—forgotten. The perfumes on the breeze
Gush out from God's own fount. Here it doth please
The lily and the rose, on lavish part,
To void their chalices to aching heart
And cheer it over weary lands and seas.
Cool dells and pools; brown heathery wall;
Rich coverlets of bright cerulean blue;
White banks of bloom; green bowery glen;
Stone flights; vine-clad pergolas—over all
Bronze monarch of the jungle reigning—through
His epoch—God's and man's good will to men!

October 17, 1920.

THE STRANDED DELEGATE.

Melinda's kitchen; Gods of Shere Kan!
And by my Pneumo—Gastric nerve
I am a weary, hungry man!

Beefstakes with their onion toga;
Jersey milk and Saratoga—
I'm shrunken like an Arctic lichen
Ninety miles from Melinda's kitchen!

The flurry's over; I'm a Bander-Log
If I don't say that I am glad—
No, waiter, I couldn't eat a pollywog!
Bring me more just like your sample,
Give me good meal, warm and ample;
(Nothing could this hour enrichen
Like the scent of Melinda's kitchen).

Melinda's kitchen! Epicurean bliss!
Just mark me down a ninny, sir,
But Melinda knows what I now miss—
Cooking of the highest merit,
Kitchen smacks from board to garret,
But here I am as lank as a lichen
Ninety miles from Melinda's kitchen.

Feb. 12, 1907.

A HOLIDAY.

Forsaking the office and tumult
For one idle, coveted day,
I hie to the bank of the streamlet
That hastens through the meadow away.

Beneath the broad maple the cattle
Do ruminant through the long hours
Quite listless of freedom and gladness
Mid pasture-lands spangled with flowers.

I pause in the shade of the maple
Selecting sweet thoughts while I rest,
And think of a youthful betrothal,
A sunny head near to my breast;

Of eyes with fond merriment rippling,
Surveying the arc at my feet,
As standing beneath the green maple
She gave the reply I repeat:

“ ‘Tis hard to cease being your sweetheart,
So hard to give up such a life—
If I could be sweetheart forever
I surely would never be wife.”

But by me is Ernestine standing
Prepared for a day on the lea;
She wed me in youth’s sunny weather,
My sweetheart forever is she.

I’ll ask her to lean on my bosom,
Like her sunny head rested before,
And we’ll stay till the cattle at even
Obey the dear call from the door.

Revised May 1, 1908.

FIDELITY.

It may be long, though maybe not—
I'd marry him today;
His presence means a happy spot
Where're he choose to stay;
His heart's a chalice love-a-brim,
I pledge me now I'll wait for him.

Tomorrow I could reign the queen
Of mansion void of blot—
I scorn pretentious lofty mien
Where true love tarries not
Nor lingers long o'er platter rim—
'Tis love I crave; I'll wait for him.

He's young and he will conquer yet;
I'll grow not old but fair—
His bride-elect! This epaulet
Of rose for him I wear;
He owns my heart, my Toiler trim—
By all that's true, I'll wait for him.

—Feb. 11, 1914.

The answer of a Shortridge High School graduate, 1906, to a reporter on the Indianapolis News which was elaborated upon therein is the source of the origin of "Careering." She bitterly opposed "careering." This is her reply reduced to rythmic narration.

CAREERING.

They offered her fabulous sums for her face,
Her treasure of voice and her womanly grace;
In the glare and the glamour she bartered and sold
Herself for the stipulate value of gold.

They took her and praised her to people of note;
In the dazzle of cities they set her afloat;
From the grandeur and halo of magazine page
Her picture did, everywhere, herald the stage.

Folks came to her city from farthest-off town
To witness the actress of clever renown—
To hear her and see her theatrical pose
In flutters of brilliancy rich to disclose.

She gathered her laurels, emblazoned her name
On the tablet of lights of theatrical fame,
But her youth and its beauty she bartered and sold
For recompense measured in values of gold.

Compressing life's largess in space of few years,
Suppressing her laughter and forcing her tears
Till the fount of her spirit is drained and is dry,
She stops short a-weary—is ready to die.

Admired though, but childless, she sinks to her grave,
No flesh of her flesh her rare beauty to save;
No place in the world save the dead niche of art,
No uppermost place in one manly man's heart.

November, 1906.

WHEN ERNESTINE LOOKS PRETTIEST.

When Ernestine looks prettiest
'Tis in her blue-checked gingham gown
Ironed to a charm,
A basket lightly weighing down
Her shapely arm.

When Ernestine looks prettiest
Is when her bonnet nodding low
Above the green
Betrays the spots where ripest grow
The fruits unseen.

When Ernestine looks prettiest
No artist can my pleasure mock
While, as she wills,
Hand moving steady as a clock,
Her basket fills.

When Ernestine looks prettiest
Her basket gleams with gold and red;
I do aver
The vision shames the pansy-bed
I made for her.

When Ernestine looks prettiest
'Tis 'mong my vines when, crooning sweet
The songs of old,
She plucks from out my garden neat
Fruits red and gold.

—August 9, 1910.

TRANSITION.

She went not far. I saw her go—depart
For realm of rest. I saw her slip away
Across the dewy morn; she went to stay
In her long-sought abode. Sweet years of heart
And love she left behind. She loathed to part
With toil, but, lo! her feet would not obey
Her will. Too tired to greet the new-born day
The wings of morning folded her apart.

We say she's gone. But down the garden path
I see her bend and breathe a tenderness
About the flowers she loved, nor naught doth mar
The bright celestial robe she wears. She hath
No attribute of earth yet doth caress
My sodden pillow—Heaven's not so far.

August, 1920.

A PRAYER.

O, Lord, dear Lord, our Lord,
 Help us to consecrate
Our lives anew. Accord
 Us Thy love. Create
Within us high esteem
 For our dear fellow men.
Thou, Lord, who didst redeem
 Us, hear us once again.

O, help us blot out self,
 Snuff out each evil thought,
Think less and less of self
 And love Thee as we ought;
Help carry on until
 We win Thy Grand Award—
O, help us say, "Thy will
Be done, Thou blessed Lord."

November 8, 1920.



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